

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04

SIL-01 PA-01 PRS-01 SSO-00 /082 W

----- 067375

R 071450Z OCT 75

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2464

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, ELAB, EPAP, PINT, GR

SUBJECT: TENSIONS RISE IN FUR INDUSTRY DISPUTE

REF: THESSALONIKI 0598

1. SUMMARY -- DISPUTE OVER FUR MONOPOLY ENJOYED BY SIATISTA AND KASTORIA IN WESTERN MACEDONIA ESCALATED OVER PAST FEW DAYS TO POINT WHERE DEMONSTRATORS SEALED MAJOR HIGHWAYS FROM KASTORIA AND PERMITTED NO MOTOR TRAFFIC TO ENTER OR LEAVE CITY FROM 1300 OCT 3 TO 0900 OCT 5. DEMONSTRATORS ALSO OCCUPIED NOMARCH'S OFFICE AND TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, CUTTING LINES IN LATTER SO THERE WAS NO PHONE COMMUNICATION WITH CITY. IT TOOK PERSONAL INTERVENTION OF MIN OF NORTHERN GREECE MARTIS, HIS SECOND IN THREE DAYS, TO RESTORE ORDER. MARTIS HAS PROMISED STUDY BOTH SIDES OF DEMANDS TO EXTEND FUR MONOPOLY TO OTHER DEPRESSED AREAS IN WESTERN MACEDONIA BUT MADE NO COMMITMENTS. HE ALSO ORDERED FULL INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEMONSTRATIONS -- END SUMMARY.

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2. AMERICAN OBSERVER WHO WAS CAUGHT BY BLOCKADING OF

KASTORIA REPORTED TO CONGEN THAT IT WAS DONE QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY BY DROPPING TREES ON MAJOR ROADS AND NO TRAFFIC, INCLUDING MILITARY OR POLICE, WAS ALLOWED TO PASS. ONCE BARRICADES WERE IN PLACE, BLOCKADE WAS APPARENTLY ENFORCED WITH TACIT AGREEMENT OF ALL CONCERNED SINCE ONLY SCHOOL CHILDREN MANNED THE BARRICADES.

3. WITHIN KASTORIA, DURING THE TWO DAYS OF THE BLOCKADE, ROVING GROUPS OF ALL AGES WERE CONSTANTLY MARCHING. THEY CARRIED BLACK FLAGS WITH NO OTHER IDENTIFICATION. MOOD, WHILE NOT FESTIVE, WAS NOT HOSTILE AND NOMARCH'S OFFICE AND TELEPHONE EXCHANGE WERE OCCUPIED QUIETLY WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT RESISTANCE FROM SECURITY FORCES.

4. BLOCKADE STARTED BREAKING UP EARLY OCT 5 WITH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MINISTER MARTIS WAS COMING. UPON HIS ARRIVAL ABOUT 1600, HIS CAR WAS BESIEGED AND IT TOOK 45 MINUTES TO COVER SHORT DISTANCE TO NOMARCH'S OFFICE WHERE HE MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF PROTEST COMMITTEES AND DEFUSED SITUATION WITHOUT MAKING COMMITMENTS. HE DID PROMISE TO PUSH FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPRESSED BORDER AREAS.

5. OCCUPATION OF NOMARCH'S OFFICE AND TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, DESPITE FACT THAT IT WAS PEACEFUL, HAS SHOCKED PUBLIC OPINION IN NORTHERN GREECE. SEARCH FOR INSTIGATORS NOW IN FULL SWING WITH CULPRITS RANGING FROM "NEO-LEFTISTS" TO "JUNTA" AND "FOREIGN" ELEMENTS. MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION REPORTED BY AMERICAN WHO WAS IN KASTORIA IS THAT LOCAL SHOPKEEPERS, AS THOSE WHO HAVE MOST TO LOSE FROM DISPERSION OF FUR INDUSTRY, ARE BEHIND DEMONSTRATIONS. FUR WORKERS, MANY OF WHOM COMMUTE FROM THE TOWNS DEMANDING PART OF FUR BUSINESS, HAVE LITTLE INCENTIVE. KASTORIA WORKERS WOULD STILL HAVE THEIR JOBS, AND OWNERS COULD RELOCATE PART OF THEIR FACILITIES WITHOUT GREAT DIFFICULTY.

6. COMMENT: REGARDLESS OF WHO IS RESPONSIBLE, INCIDENT POINTS OUT DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEPRESSED BORDER AREA. FUR INDUSTRY IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT, BUT IT BASICALLY CONSISTS OF MAKING FUR COATS FROM SMALL CLIPPINGS WHICH FOREIGN FURRIERS, PRIMARILY U.S., EXPORT TO GREECE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ECONOMICALLY EXPLOITABLE ELSEWHERE. MORE THAN THE DISPERSAL OF THIS INDUSTRY IS REQUIRED TO SOLVE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF AREA, BUT FACT THAT THIS IS THE MAJOR INDUSTRY AND ONE WHICH HAS AROUSED SUCH GREAT EMOTION

SHOWS HOW ECONOMICALLY DESPERATE THE SITUATION IS.  
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## Message Attributes

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